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ABSTRACT

This report describes Ball State University's MBA/TV program in which the College of Business offers a structured series of telecourses making it easy for students to acquire a graduate business education (MBA) where they live and work. It utilizes a statewide educational communications system called the Indiana Higher Education Telecommunication System which has proved to be an ideal medium for the College of Business to tap new markets via the MBA/TV program. The program is designed to meet the needs of currently employed professionals who wish to obtain graduate education in business on a part-time basis. It permits students who do not have access to an accredited MBA program to undertake such work. MBA/TV is broadcast via television with telephone interactive capability. The courses are available at 51 companies and educational institutions in the state, and 47 students have graduated from this program so far. College of Business professors are required to attend a 2-week workshop to get them adjusted to teaching in front of a camera, create visual material that can be transformed for computer transmission, and use the overhead camera method rather than the traditional blackboard method where the professor blocks the information from the camera's eye. Student evaluations of the program are consistently favorable. (SM)

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M.B.A.
By
Television

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AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project

The AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory is a two-year project seeking to establish and test a model system for collecting and disseminating information on model programs at AASCU-member institutions--375 of the public four-year colleges and universities in the United States.

The four objectives of the project are:

- o To increase the information on model programs available to all institutions through the ERIC system
- o To encourage the use of the ERIC system by AASCU institutions
- o To improve AASCU's ability to know about, and share information on, activities at member institutions, and
- o To test a model for collaboration with ERIC that other national organizations might adopt.

The AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project is funded with a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education to the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, in collaboration with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education at The George Washington University.

ABSTRACT

Ball State University's College of Business offers a structured series of telecourses that make it easy for students to acquire a graduate business education (M.B.A.) of high quality where they live and work.

Using the Indiana Higher Education Telecommunication System (IHETS), the university broadcasts to over fifty sites across the state. Through the State Universities Voice Network open telephone lines allow viewers to call in questions and comments during the broadcast. Classes are scheduled during evenings and weekends. The telecourses allow a limited number of faculty members to be available to meet growing demands for off-campus education.

INTRODUCTION

The following narrative includes information regarding the MBA/TV program offered by Ball State University. Details regarding program inception, operation, and evaluation will be explained and the target population will be identified. Finally, program goals, staffing, and funding issues will be addressed.

BACKGROUND

The MBA/TV program, developed by the College of Business and School of Continuing Education, utilizes a state-wide educational communications system called the Indiana Higher Education Telecommunication System or IHETS.

The IHETS network has proved to be an ideal medium for Ball State's College of Business to tap new markets through the MBA/TV program. Since the MBA degree is designed for professionals who have work experience and an upwardly mobile goal, the MBA by TV which allows students to work and go to school at the same time, is reaching a greater pool of these prospective students.

At the same time, the televised MBA classes allow the university to meet the increasing demands for distance education with a limited number of faculty members.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT/PROGRAM

Target Population

This program was designed to meet the needs of currently employed professionals who wish to obtain graduate education in business on a part-time basis. It is particularly for those professionals who have work experience and an upwardly mobile goal. This program permits students who do not have access to an accredited MBA program, due to geographic location or time availability limitations, to undertake a program.

Focus and Scope of the Program

Ball State University's College of Business offers an accredited MBA program using state-of-the-art technology. The program is broadcast via television with telephone interactive capability. The MBA courses are available at more than fifty companies and educational institutions in the state that have facilities for receiving the live broadcast.

Major Audience

This program is designed to meet the needs of part-time students, currently employed professionals, who wish to obtain a graduate education in business. Using the IHETS network, the program can be broadcast over the entire state of Indiana. This permits students without access or willingness to commute to campus to participate in a selected distance learning program.

Goals and Philosophy

This MBA program is accredited by AACSB, the most stringent accrediting agency for business programs in the United States. Ball State University believes the approach used in offering the MBA by television is consistent with the accreditation standards of the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). Among the Policies, Procedures and Standards of the AACSB is an encouragement to "develop...new learning approaches and technologies ." Students who are admitted to the MBA/TV undergo the same admission standards and have the same curriculum contract as do on-campus students.

Staffing

The nature of the program limits individual student contact with faculty and counseling staff. Although not an essential ingredient in making the program available, contact with university personnel is an important enhancement for maximizing the program quality and student satisfaction. Therefore, this program employs a coordinator and assistant coordinator who serve as academic advisors to the MBA/TV students. In addition, a secretary, two graduate assistants and one student assistant have been added to deal with the sizable growth in the MBA student population. Due to the fact that the MBA/TV students are physically separated from the university campus, the office staff provides a greater array of services than would generally be available to students on-campus. In addition, a Coordinator for Television Instruction works with faculty participating/teaching

in the program.

Funding

An annual budget of \$122,000 supports an assistant graduate coordinator, secretary, two graduate assistants, and a student assistant as well as partial funding for operation, equipment, and travel. Additional costs not covered in this figure include the salaries of the Graduate Coordinator and Coordinator of TV Instruction and other office personnel and expenses. These costs are charged to other units in the university.

Present Status

The project continues to operate offering six courses each semester and four courses in the summer. Over fifty sites throughout the state have agreed to offer our program.

RESULTS

The first experimental course was offered via TV during winter quarter in 1983-84. It was offered at two sites and had an enrollment of eleven students.

We currently deliver the MBA/TV to fifty-one (51) sites and have a spring 1988-89 enrollment of 391. Forty-seven (47) students have graduated from this program earning their MBA degree by taking televised courses on a part-time basis. Sixteen MBA televised courses are offered each year.

Students are given the opportunity to evaluate the program, specific courses, and their professors each term. While too lengthy to replicate here, these evaluations have consistently been favorable and have allowed us to make improvements in the program. To date, ninety-nine percent (99%) of students surveyed by the College of Business in its quarterly program evaluation considered the MBA/TV program to be excellent, good, or average. Only two students since the program's inception have indicated that they would not continue taking courses through this educational medium.

Even on the technical side, 96 percent (96%) of the respondents were satisfied with the communications. The credit here is due mainly to University Media Services.

Tests administered last spring to 17 graduates of the university's MBA/TV program and 20 graduates of the MBA program on campus showed no statistical difference in the performance of the two groups.

The standardized tests were designed by the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business Core Curriculum Assessment Program and were used by Ball State to compare MBA students enrolled in television courses with MBA students taking the same courses on campus in a traditional classroom. The test included seven exams covering accounting, business strategy, finance, human resources, marketing, management information systems and production and operations management.

Conclusions/Recommendations

The Indiana Higher Education Telecommunication System (IHETS) network has proved to be an ideal medium for Ball State's College of Business to tap new markets through the MBA/TV program. As one may assume, the MBA/TV program would not work without the complex technical system of the IHETS network. This program also requires sophisticated and knowledgeable Media Services personnel to produce top quality programming.

Because the MBA/TV program uses such a technical medium, College of Business professors are required to attend and are compensated for a two-week workshop, getting them adjusted to teaching in front of a camera, creating visual material that can be transformed by a professional graphic artist for computer transmission, and using the overhead camera method rather than the traditional blackboard method where the professor blocks the information from the camera's eye. Like the MBA/TV students, most professors teaching these courses enjoy the experience once they get beyond the initial 'camera shy' phase. Of course, it requires a great deal more effort to teach an IHETS class.

Perhaps the most critical factor required for success in a program such as this is a total cooperative university effort. It is vital that support come from the top administrative unit of the university.